# 25 Years Ago at MSC

## Newsman, MSC employee say space program is significant

*Reprinted from the Dec. 22, 1972, issue of Space News Roundup*

At the beginning of the space program, public support and enthusiasm were almost overwhelming.

Then when lunar exploration began, everyone anxiously awaited the moment the first man set foot on the moon.

Since Apollo 11, however, it seems that public support of the space program has decreased somewhat.

Questions often arise concerning the significance of the space program in general and the Apollo program in particular.

Following are excerpts from statements made by two men, one program in particular, a NASA employee—Thomas L. Wilson of MSC's Flight Simulation Branch, and the other a non-NASA employee—Howard K. Smith, well-known news commentator of ABC.

Both men strongly support the space program and attempt to assert significance to it's past and future.

*The first ideas, those of Howard K Smith, were reprinted from the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics newsletter:*

Every moon trip, enthusiasm is a little less, the cry a lot louder—stop squandering money in the sky when we can't solve problems on earth.

Every moon trip I cannot forebear answering—that money in the sky does solve problems on earth, as nothing else would. Think of its effects so far. It provoked the National Defense Education Act, which has made U.S. higher education in mastery of the earth the best in the world. Youth from poor nations crowd our colleges to learn from it how to meet their problems at home.

The rich spin-offs are in the thousands, like the pacemaker, lengthening life against our most costly disease … satellite communication which brought us live contact with Peking and is the first condition for one day making the world one … computer technology which has become our most competitive, indeed world-dominant, export in a time when our older industries lag.

If there is ever a disarmed world, it will be because spy satellites of the space program have opened every nation's secrets to the other's inspection.

And the very system of problem-solving it invented provides team methods we would not otherwise have known to save the cities and clean the environment, whenever Congress gets around to legislation to apply those remarkable methods.

I mention only in passing the vast expansion of knowledge and resources, bound to eventuate in sudden discoveries to come but which could not have happened without this long investment.

The space program is the one unconditionally good thing we have done lately. Cutting it back after this beginning is one of the silliest.

*The next statements were printed with permission from Thomas L. Wilson. Wilson hopes to get his ideas published in Science magazine but first wanted to share some of them with fellow MSC employees:*

The finest thing that man can do is what he does for Man. With the End of the Apollo program now at hand in Apollo 17, it is fitting and proper to assess the meaning of Man's first lunar landings not only in terms of human science but human understanding as well. What does it mean for Man?

The answer lies in search for self. In Man's search for himself, the moon has proven to be an immutable gift from time, a rosetta stone for endless years the same.

Living in an age of anxiety and a time of uncertainly, little did we see in nature that was ours. We had forsaken ourselves and the wilderness bestowed upon us by our mother Earth.

The despair of modern man and the insecurity of our time had conspired against him. A whole generation had lost its way in the dark wilderness of our minds, with no clear picture of what we were or what we ought to be.

But Apollo 11 brought about a decided end to that. For a few moments there was peace on Earth while Man looked aloft, taking his thoughts away from himself toward something bigger than his comparison with other men.

For once we could see beyond the miserable duration of human life.

Through Apollo we have seen ourselves reaching out, not to exploit but to explore and to understand to understand ourselves and the world about us. We have lit a candle so that man can stop cursing darkness and learn how to conquer himself.

Now we understand better why we went to the moon and why we shall go beyond. We did not just go there just in the name of human science, for science is not enough. Nor did we go there to mend the broken wings of man. We went there to save the Dignity of Man.

It is man's space. It is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End of Apollo.

JSC Photo S72-55065

**Above: Apollo 17 Scientist-Astronaut Harrison H. Schmitt is seen anchoring the geophone module with a flag in this reproduction taken from a color television transmission made by the camera mounted on the Lunar Roving Vehicle. The geophone module is part of the Lunar Seismic Profiling Experiment, a component of the Apollo Lunar Surface Experiments Package. Other ALSEP components are visible in the picture. Left: The Apollo 17 astronauts bid the Taurus-Littrow landing site farewell as the Lunar Module "Challenger" makes its spectacular liftoff from the lunar surface. The Lunar Roving Vehicle camera, remotely controlled from the Mission Control Center in Houston, made it possible for people on Earth to watch the event.**

JSC Photo S72-55421

## *Author reviews writings of 25 years ago*

Tom Wilson, the Rice graduate student who wrote part of the 1972 perspective piece on Apollo, still works at JSC. Then, he was a guidance and navigation flight instructor for Apollo astronauts; now, he is studying cosmic ray astrophysics in the Earth Science and Solar System Exploration Division. He also has written a book intended to justify a return to the Moon for scientific purposes.

"I cannot help but compare the lasting legacy of Apollo 17 with that of Apollo 11," he said this month after rereading what he wrote in 1972. "The latter was a discovery, an awakening to something we knew was there and we finally proved we could do it. But Apollo 17 was about exploration, that haunting wanderlust that stirs the human spirit to search through the unknown and do the impossible.

"Some of us saw it as a defeat because it was the last flight of the Apollo program and the end something special. However, the believers have never accepted defeat, and to this day we see Apollo 17 as only a magnificent beginning and not an end, the first step in a long incredible journey called space exploration," Wilson said.

# Gilruth Center News

**Hours**: The Gilruth Center is open from 6:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 6:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday, and 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday.

**Sign up policy**: All classes and athletic activities are first come, first served. Sign up in person at the Gilruth Center and show a yellow Gilruth or weight room badge. Classes tend to fill up two weeks in advance. Payment must be made in full, in exact change or by check, at the time of registration. No registration will be taken by telephone. For more information, call x30304.

**Gilruth badges**: Required for use of the Gilruth Center. Employees, spouses, eligible dependents, NASA retirees and spouses may apply for photo identification badges from 7:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Friday; and 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays. Cost is $10. Dependents must be between 16 and 23 years old.

**Hatha Yoga**: A stress relieving, stretching and breathing exercise routine to unite body, mind and spirit. Classes meet from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Thursdays. Cost is $40 for eight weeks.

**Nutrition intervention program**: A six-week program to learn more about the role diet and nutrition play in health, including lectures, private consultations with a dietitian and blood analysis. Program is open to all employees, contractors and spouses. For more information call Tammie Shaw at x32980.

**Defensive driving**: One-day course is offered once a month. Pre-registration required. Cost is $25. Call for next available class.

**Stamp club**: Meets at 7 p.m. every second and fourth Monday in Rm. 216.

**Weight safety:** Required course for employees wishing to use the weight room will be offered from 8-9:30 p.m. Call for next available class. Pre-registration is required. Cost is $5. Annual weight room use fee is $90. Additional family members are $50.

**Exercise**: Low-impact class meets from 5:15-6:15 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. Cost is $24 for eight weeks.

**Aikido**: Introductory martial arts class meets from 5:15-6:15 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday. Cost is $35 per month. New classes begin the first of each month.

**Step/Bench aerobics**: Classes meet from 5:15-6:15 p.m. Monday, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Cost is $32 for eight weeks. Kristen Taragzewski, instructor.

**Ballroom dancing**: Beginner classes meet from 7-8:15 p.m. Thursdays. Intermediate and advanced classes meet from 8:15-9:30 p.m. Cost is $60 per couple.

**Country and western dancing**: Beginner class meets 7-8:30 p.m. Monday. Advanced class (must know basic steps to all dances) meets 8:30-10 p.m. Monday. Cost is $20 per couple.

**Fitness program**: Health Related Fitness Program includes a medical screening examination and a 12-week individually prescribed exercise program. For more information call Larry Wier at x30301.

**Gilruth Home Page**: Check out all activities at the Gilruth online at: http://www4.jsc.nasa.gov/ah/exceaa/Gilruth/Gilruth.htm

# Ticket Window

he following discount tickets are available for purchase in the Bldg. 11 Exchange Store from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday and in the Bldg. 3 Exchange Store from 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday - Friday. For more information call x35350 or x30990.

**EAA New Year's Eve Dinner/Dance**: Dec. 31, $27.50 per person

**Moody Gardens**: Tickets are $9.50 for two of four events

**Space Center Houston:** Adult $8.95; children (4-11) $6.40 JSC civil service employees free.

**Movie discounts:** General Cinema, $5.25; AMC Theater, $4.50; Sony Loew's Theater, $4.75

**Shirts**: JSC logo T-shirt, $10, polo style, $23; International Space Station logo golf shirts, $26 and $28

**Stamps**: Book of 20, $6.40

**1998 Franklin Planner** replacement refill orders being taken now.

Sweetwater Pecans: Orders are being taken now; cost is $5.75 per pound.

**Metro passes**: Tokens and value cards available.

**Book available**: *Suddenly Tomorrow Came: A History of Johnson Space Center.*

**Upcoming events**: EAA Spring Break Ireland Trip: March 21-29, $1,399 per person, double occupancy ($200 deposit per person, final payment due Jan. 21).

# Roundup Deadlines

The Space News Roundup is published every other Friday. Story ideas should be submitted as far in advance as possible, but no later than two weeks prior to the date of publication.

The deadline for Dates & Data calendar items is three weeks prior to the date of publication.

Stories and ideas should be submitted to Kelly Humphries in Bldg. 2, Rm. 180, or via e-mail to kelly.o.humphries1@jsc.nasa.gov